



Underwater Hockey **Safety Regulations**

Underwater Hockey, also known as Octopush, is a supreme aerobic game. It was invented in the early 1950s by sub-aqua divers in Southsea who got bored just swimming up and down pool lanes to get fit. The game is now played worldwide. Underwater hockey is fast, furious, and fun ... and you can join in.

How do you play?

Players wear the basic equipment of a mask, snorkel, fins, and water polo hat. They hold a small stick, about the size of a spatula, in a gloved hand. The idea of the game is to use the stick to push the 1.2 kilogramme puck into the opposing team's goal, which consists of a three metre tray at the opposing end of a 25 metre pool.

Why is it the supreme aerobic game?

All other sports allow the participants to breathe as they play. But in underwater hockey, players breathe through their snorkels on the top of the water before diving down to do battle with their opponents. Some players can stay down for a long time indeed, but the real skill of the game is judging when to dive. It can take just a few seconds to tackle an opponent and pass the puck to a colleague, and then return to the surface for a well-earned breath!

How many play?

There are 10 people in a team, but only six are allowed in the water at one time. This results in fast substitutions which resemble tag wrestling. The idea is to work quickly, and then get out to recover. This increases the speed and exhilaration of the game.

Who can play underwater hockey?

Just about anyone who can swim. It is easy to learn to use a mask and snorkel. This is a stark contrast to sub-aqua diving, which can take many months to master.

What next?

If you want to find a club near you that plays Underwater Hockey, then go to the British Octopush Association website www.gbuwh.co.uk

Regulations extract from British Octopush Association website www.gbuwh.co.uk

1. Player's Equipment

- a) Each player shall be equipped with a mask, which must have safety glass or other safety material fitted, a non metal, pliable snorkel, a pair of conventional underwater hockey fins (made of non dangerous pliable material), hand protection for the playing hand, internal or external mouth guard and an underwater hockey stick.
- b) The mask must be a dual lens design.
- c) Hand protection (e.g. glove) must not contain rigid or sharp reinforcing material.

- d) Gloves used for hand protection may not have webbing between fingers, or be of any design which would aid swimming.
- e) The hand protection (e.g. glove) worn by a player for any given match must be of a colour that strongly contrasts with the colour of that player's stick and the colour of the puck used for the match. Players may not wear a glove of a colour that could be confused with the Water Referees' gloves which shall always be bright yellow or orange.
- f) A player's hand protection must not be the same colour as the puck.
- g) Headgear or caps with firm ear protectors must be worn.
- h) Protective knee and/or elbow pads may also be worn if required, provided they are constructed of soft materials.
- i) Wet suits and/or weight belts may not be worn.

2. The Stick

- a) The stick shall be of an approved material.
- b) The stick must fit wholly in a box with interior dimensions of 100mm x 350mm x 50mm.
- c) The stick must not be capable of surrounding the puck or any part of the hand. The stick may not encapsulate the puck by more than 50% or lock the puck to the stick. The stick may not protrude from the heel of the protected hand by more than 25mm.
- d) The stick must be considered safe. It must be structurally sound and edges where surfaces intersect must be rounded such that they cannot cause harm. If the Match Chief Referee or Water Referee determines that the stick may cause harm, the stick may be removed from play for that match.
- e) The stick must be uniformly black or white, however it may have a discreet marking in a contrasting colour for identification purposes. If the Chief Referee or Water Referee determines that the symbol or initial(s) could create confusion as to the colour of the stick, the stick may be removed from play for that match.
- f) The stick may be secured to the playing hand in a manner that cannot cause harm or interfere with the puck.
- g) The puck may not be played with the portion of the stick that may protrude from the heel of the protected hand.
- h) All personal and team equipment must have the approval of a Referee.

- i) Any part of a player's equipment which in the opinion of any Referee may be dangerous or may harm another player will not be allowed to be used during a match.
- j) In deciding if a piece of equipment should be allowed or not a player may ask for the opinion of the Tournament Chief Referee who's decision will be final.